Jesus: Non Posse Peccare; God Tests but Does Not Tempt; Christ Was Tempted by the Devil & the World but Did Not Sin, Heb 4:15; the Soul's Ménage à Trois in James 1:13–15

51.   The verb *peirazō* is used three times in this verse, the first two in the passive voice which means that the temptation comes from an outside source. However, the outside source cannot be God. It is first stated that "God cannot be tempted from an outside source to do evil." The final use is active voice, "God does not produce the action of tempting anyone."

52.   Therefore, in His deity Jesus Christ could not be tempted and as a result could not sin: *non posse peccare*.

53.   With regard to our Lord's humanity the phrase *posse non peccare* means "able not to sin." This was possible since He functioned completely within the prototype spiritual life designed for the Lord in the Incarnation.

54.   The primary meaning of *peirazō* in the New Testament is "testing." In His humanity our Lord was tested on many occasions.

55.   God tests us so as to determine our value. If we are of high quality then we are able to apply doctrine very efficiently and endure the testing with poise and grace.

56.   However, since testing is a part of the plan of God we often fail under testing. This is designed to demonstrate to us through human experience that we must continue our spiritual growth if we are to achieve mastery over the sources of temptation: the flesh, the world, and the devil.

57.   Failing tests implies failure to apply doctrine which is often accompanied by certain sins: fear, anger, bitterness, animosity, and self-centeredness, to name a few.

58.   God tests us but does not tempt us. If we produce the action of being tempted it is a volitional response to the *agent provocateurs* of the sinful nature, the allurements of the world, or of demon influence.

59.   During the Incarnation the humanity of Christ was the *target* of several temptations but none of them was successful in causing Him to sin.

60.   When temptation is directed toward a person it is an enticement to sin by offering some suggested advantage. This is "aggressive temptation."

61.   When a person responds to the enticement he is tempted by the desire to possess the proposed advantage. This is "responsive temptation."

62.   Understand clearly what I mean here. Temptation has three sources: (1) the flesh, or sinful nature, (2) the world through its allurements, and (3) the devil by means of demon influence and demon possession.

63.   Our Lord did not have a sinful nature so He did not receive enticements from within. Lucifer did make a concerted effort to tempt Him from without which included intended allurements from the world. For example:

   Matthew 4:1 - Then Jesus was led up by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted **[aorist passive infinitive of πειράζω, *peirazō*]** by the devil.

64.   The passive voice means that Jesus Christ was the object or target of the three temptations presented by Lucifer. Whether the Lord is enticed by these temptations is dependent upon His volitional response to them.

65. We know on each occasion He rejected the offer by citing biblical rationales against each.

66. Lucifer sought to propagandize our Lord into violating the rules of engagement for the Incarnation but the Lord did not make the decision to be brainwashed by them.

67. Consequently, outside sources sought to entice our Lord into entertaining temptation but He did not respond and thus remained without sin:

Hebrews 4:15 - For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted [perfect **passive** participle of πειράζω, *peirazō*] in all things as we are, yet without sin.

68. Fallen humanity on the other hand does entertain the temptations offered by the flesh, the world, and the devil. This is described in detail for us in:

James 1:13 - Let no one say when he [**personal volition**] is tempted [present **passive** participle of πειράζω, *peirazō*], "I am being tempted [present **passive** indicative] by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt [present **active** indicative] anyone.

v. 14 - But each person [**emphasis on volition**] is always tempted [present **passive** indicative] when he is consistently towed about [static present of ἐξέλκω, *exelkō*: lit: "one boat towing another"; came to mean "to allure": volition is allured] by means of the lust pattern [ἐπιθυμία, *epithumia* (feminine gender)] and enticed with bait [δελεάζω, *deleazō*: "to lure"; "to entice"].

James 1:15 - Then lust, having conceived [συλλαμβάνω, *sullambanō*: lit: "to receive seed"; aorist tense for a point in time: many cohabiters, few pregnancies; lust (female gender) only becomes sin when its seed is fertilized by negative volition (male gender)] gives birth to sin [τίκτω ἁμαρτία, *tiktō hamartia*: sin is delivered: volitional consent] and sin having been delivered alive consistently gives birth [static present of ἀποκυέω, *apokueō*: "to deliver (out from the womb] to death [θάνατος, *thanatos*: operational death].

69. When sin is committed the believer moves into operational death. He is involved in a spiritual *ménage à trois* during which time he is engaged in a spiritual civil war within his own members.

70. The seductress, her philanderer, their courtship, intercourse, conception, delivery, and result are all found in the passage: **(1)** the paramour: ablative of means, feminine gender of ἐπιθυμία, *epithumia*: the lust pattern; **(2)** the philanderer: the implied free will of the tempted believer which is masculine gender; **(3)** their courtship: ἐξέλκω, *exelkō*: to be towed about; **(4)** intercourse: δελεάζω, *deleazō*: to be enticed by bait; **(5)** conception: συλλαμβάνω, *sullambanō*: to receive seed from the philanderer; **(6)** delivery: τίκτω, *tiktō*: live birth of sin; and **(7)** the result: θάνατος, *thanatos*: operational death. The old sin nature now controls the soul.

71. We illustrated this passage by developing an allegory from the world of entomology, a strange encounter involving a wasp, a caterpillar, and a bed of ants. (See *Clanking Chains*: CC02-264 through 266.)

72.   Consequently, although our Lord was true humanity, He was never seduced by temptation and He remained sinless as a result. This is called impeccability and it describes not only the eternal status of His undiminished deity but also the perpetual status of His true humanity.

73.   Thus, it may be said that Jesus Christ as the God-Man has one essence forever. This essence is composed of two natures: a divine nature and a human nature. They are united in one Person to create the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ.

74.   This unique personality has, because of His two natures, two distinct modi operandi: as undiminished deity He is Master of the human race; as true humanity He is a bondslave to God.